

WILL FCC STUNT KIDS' RATINGS?

By JOHN DEMPSEY

NEW YORK As Congress and the Federal Communications Commission turn up the heat, TV stations are scrambling to pick up kiddie shows that focus more on information than on pure entertainment. And that has TV syndicators rushing to fill the bill — even though the ratings outlook for educational TV is less than rosy.

Jim Curtin, VP and director of programming for the HRP rep firm, says, "Unfortunately, kids treat most of these programs like castor oil — they don't like taking it."

"Two years ago we had a batch of syndicated series get on the air like 'The Wide World of Kids' and 'K-TV,'" says Janeen Bjork, VP and director of programming for Seltel, the TV rep firm. "Each of them barely got a 1 rating and they all quickly went away."

But with Bush out and Clinton in, there's no doubt that the FCC means business. So, despite the grim picture for their success, a slew of new shows will end up on stations' schedules in September.

As Jack Fentress, VP of programming for Petry National, puts it, "It's like the fox has pounced on the henhouse and the hens are running around the farmyard in a panic."

Among the new properties:

■ "Nick News," a weekly half-hour mag show from Viacom Intl. that's already running on Viacom's Nickelodeon. It's all barter, for September '93. Each episode will run in syndication and on Nickelodeon, with stations getting it some 32 hours in advance.

■ "Kids of Courage," which distrib Claster TV says is a combination of "Sesame Street" and "Rescue 911." The half-hour weekly goes on-air fall '93 for barter and fixed cash license fees ranging from \$300 to \$50 a week depending on market size.

■ "Pick Your Brain," a quiz show hosted by Marc "Double Dare" Summers. Distrib Summit Media says stations in more than 70% of the country are taking the all-barter weekly half-hour.

■ "Mad Scientists Toon Club:toon of the Week," a wacky science show that will mix live action and animation in a weekly barter half-hour. Saban Entertainment says about 60 markets have already cleared it.

■ An untitled 26-half-hour educational/entertainment program from Disney's Buena Vista TV. Disney will pair it with 26 episodes of the off-Disney Channel live-actioner "Adventures in Wonderland." Both are for fall '93.

■ "The Edison Twins," another off-Disney Channel half-hour, which the distrib, Grove TV, failed to clear two years ago because cash-strapped stations were wary of the Canadian mys-

tery-adventure-science program. Grove is now clearing stations for ad time on the station's schedule, which Grove will sell to a media-buying service.

■ Two marginally rated news shows already on the air, 20th-TV's "Not Just the News" and TPS "Real News for Kids," have picked up new station commitments. Though relatively expensive to produce — between \$40,000 and \$50,000 an episode — their distrib says their cash license fees make them strong possibilities to return next season.

Hot or not, these brainy properties still face an uphill battle.

"Advertisers want to place their spots in an environment of animated series," says David Goodman, senior VP of domestic distribution for Saban Entertainment, who flopped in the 1991-92 season with "Wide World of Kids" and "K-TV," neither of which was a cartoon.

Animated series are in vogue not only with advertisers, but with international broadcasters and with homevideo companies in the U.S. and abroad, says Goodman.

So why are only three of the nine shows cartoons?

Various sources say animation can cost 10 times as much as live-action. The priciest cartoons, from Disney and Warner Bros. TV, can cost up to \$425,000 a half-hour, sources say, adding that Hanna-Barbera's go for \$250,000 to \$275,000 a half-hour. The average half-hour cartoon cost is somewhere around \$250,000, per sources.

Cheap still hurting

But even the much cheaper live-action kids shows find it hard to keep afloat in a competitive environment where a 1 rating

CPB topper Carlson: Save RFE, Radio Liberty

Corp. for Public Broadcasting topper Richard Carlson urged Congress to consider placing Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and other government-backed broadcasting services under the arm of CPB.

Carlson made his pitch before the House international operations subcommittee, a panel chaired by Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.). Berman recently offered legislation that would consolidate U.S. government-backed broadcasting efforts and create a new radio service to Asian countries.

Carlson told lawmakers it's redundant to have VOA, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe broadcasting to the same audiences in Asia and Europe. He also criticized the Clinton administration plan to consolidate all broadcasting under USIA, and to eliminate Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

Dingell sends 'cablegram'

In a letter to the Federal Communications Commission, House Energy and Commerce Committee chairman John Dingell (D-Mich.) urged it "to refrain from succumbing to political pressures ... from any party interested in these proceedings" when it votes this week to implement key provisions of the cable rereg bill.

The missive is seen as an attempt to counter a slew of letters from cable-bashing lawmakers in the last week, which urged the FCC to take a hard line against the cable industry.

Privately, FCC employees have complained that some Capitol Hill staffers are pressuring the agency to draft more draconian rules. One FCC source said congressional staffers are trying to "reinvent legislative history."

Bell Atlantic gets films-by-phone nod

The FCC approved Bell Atlantic Corp.'s bid to become the first regional Bell telephone company to deliver films and other video programming over phone lines.

The approval stems from an FCC decision last year to allow telcos to deliver programming over a "video dialtone," an ambitious plan that permits customers to "dial up" TV shows or films over the phone line and be billed on a per-program basis.

Bell Atlantic, which is the local phone service provider in the Mid-Atlantic region, plans to test video dialtone in the homes of 400 of its employees in the D.C. suburbs.

Too much TV violence?

The Boston-based Foundation to Improve Television asked

MAVENS ON THE MOVE













Buena Vista TV taps Jim Packer VP

JIM PACKER has been named to fill the Buena Vista Television post left vacant by RICK JACOBSON, recently appointed manager of Viacom's syndicate

RANCK TO MULTIMEDIA

JOHN C. RANCK named senior VP

NIGHTLY NIELSEN RATINGS WEEK

	Small Wars 10.3/16	Am. Detective 11.3/17	12.5/19	Movie: Navy Seals 12.9/20	12.4/20	12.0/21
	Working Stiffs 12.8/20	Heart's Desire 12.3/19	Murphy Brown 15.1/23	Love & War 13.4/21	Northern Exposure 15.3/25	15.1/26
	Frank's Place 13.8/22	Glennan 13.1/20	12.1/18	Movie: Street Cop 12.5/19	12.8/20	12.4/21
	TV-14 Restricted					
	Full House 14.9/23	Mr. Cooper 13.3/20	Baywatch 10.2/20	Jessie Thomas 12.8/20	Homefront 9.8/16	9.4/17
	Baywatch 15.3/24		17.1/26	12.3/18	People's Choice Awards 12.8/21	14.9/24
	7.9/12	Movie: Women with a Past 7.7/12	8.7/13	9.5/15	Executive DDC 10.2/17	
	Class of '86 3.9/6		3.5/6	Key West 3.9/6	TV-14 Restricted	
	Wonder Years 10.3/16	Beagle 16.1/15	Home Improv. 22.8/34	Coach 19.9/30	Stress 12.3/21	11.2/21
	How'd They Do That? 11.8/19		12.7/19	In the Heat of the Night 7.8/12	8.4/13	48 Hours 12.7/22
	Unusual Mysteries 12.8/21		15.8/23	Remains 9.1/14	9.9/14	Law and Order 16.1/17
	Beauty 101, 09/19 8.5/13		8.9/13	Madras Place 6.9/7	5.9/6	

	10.9/17	11.8/18	Midweek	12.5/19	12.9/20	PrimeTime Live	16.3/27	16.5/29
	8.1/13	Top Cops	8.8/14	Street Stories	10.0/17	Knight Landing	11.4/19	11.9/21
	Cheers Jr.	Wings	Cheers	Solmfield		Crime & Punishment	9.3/15	8.5/16
	11.1/17	12.5/19	15.5/23	15.8/24				
	Stephens	Martin	R.C. Reynolds	Sons the Shore		No 2nd season		
	10.9/17	11.3/17	8.9/13	6.3/10				
	Family Matters	Step by Step	Batting By	Where I Live		28/29		
	13.1/23	13.1/23	12.4/21	11.0/19		15.1/27	15.7/29	
	Golden Palace	Major Dad	Design: Women	Sah		Pinkie Pensee	6.9/13	6.9/13
	8.2/14	8.2/16	9.9/17	9.2/16				
	World Figure Skating			Movie: In the Arms of a Killer				
	6.0/11	6.5/11	7.9/14	8.3/14		8.3/15	7.9/14	
	Amateur's Most Wanted		Sightings	Sightings Spec.		No 2nd season		
	8.8/14	8.9/15	6.9/12	6.7/12				
	10.3/16	Indiana Jones Chronicle		11.3/18		Cosmos	12.2/21	13.3/24
		9.9/15	11.0/17					
	Dr. Quinn, Medicine Women		How'd They Do That?			Reven	7.3/13	7.3/13
	14.8/23	16.0/23	9.8/15	10.0/16				
	8.3/15	World Figure Skating		12.0/19		Reconcilable Dishes, Spec.	7.5/13	8.0/14
		9.4/15	11.8/18					
	Cops	Cops 2	Cops 3	Cops 3, Spec.		No 2nd season		
	11.3/17	12.3/19	14.0/16	8.9/14				

WEDNESDAY	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
1	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
2	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
3	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
4	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
5	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
6	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
7	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
8	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
9	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
10	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16

THURSDAY	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
1	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
2	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
3	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
4	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
5	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
6	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
7	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
8	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
9	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16
10	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16	10.3/16

Programing scenarios for network prime time

By THOMAS TYRER
Staff reporter

LOS ANGELES—Over the next two days, the four networks will reveal their prime candidates for new fall series berths, with many designed specifically for certain time period needs.

CBS is set to begin the presentations tomorrow morning, followed by ABC in the afternoon, NBC Wednesday morning and FBC later in the day.

Here are some of the major prime-time trouble spots and possible scheduling moves:

CBS

Mondays may look a bit different next fall, with a comedy swap from Fridays a possibility.

Wednesday's 8 p.m. (ET) hour is sure to be in play, and a major change there could mean re-drawing the rest of the night.

On Thursdays, "Picket Fences" is likely to get a

Saturday is prime for a major revamp, with a two-hour block of magazine-like elements in the works, and "The Commish" prone for a move.

NBC

Tuesday is fertile ground for major change, and the key on Wednesdays is whether NBC has anything in the hopper better than "Homicide." The network also has to decide on which of those two nights—or both—it will switch gears to non-drama programming.

Thursday will get a new anchor, and the middle of that slate looks ready to absorb the new "Cheers" spinoff. "L.A. Law's" ability to hold down its usual 10 p.m. slot is in doubt. Cancellation isn't out of the question, but a shift to a lower-rated night is more likely.

On Fridays, NBC is playing with the idea of a two-hour "Perry Mason"-driven movie wheel.

And the network probably will, for once, get a reprieve from its annual Sunday night revamp, thanks to some growth there this season.

FBC

'Beakman' exiting first-run for CBS

By THOMAS TYRER
Staff reporter

negative comments from stations.

LOS ANGELES—Columbia Pictures Television Distribution last week pulled its weekly educational children's series "Beakman's World" out of first-run syndication and moved it to CBS's Saturday morning slate instead.

The expected action removes the first-year "Beakman's World" from 225 stations covering 99 percent of the country when the show moves to CBS next fall.

Following the March 17 CBS deal, The Learning Channel, which currently televises "Beakman's World" in prime time on cable, renewed it for another year.

"This happens to be one of those very unique situations. When you have an educational program of this sort, it's an incredible advantage to have a national promotional platform."

In the weeks since the Federal Communications Commission began publicly decrying the quality of kids TV, "Beakman" has become a hot property because of its blend of entertainment and information.

CBS's licensing of the show will allow its affiliates an important program with which to meet any FCC scrutiny, while the 163 non-CBS affiliates currently clearing "Beakman's World" will

CBS holds lead

1993-94 SATURDAY MORNING LINEUPS

APPENDIX C



ORAL TESTIMONY

OF

**MR. PAUL LA CAMERA
WCVB-TV
BOSTON, MA**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**

ON

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

MARCH 10, 1993

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am Paul La Camera, Vice President of Programming and Station Manager of WCVB-TV in Boston.

As you well know, the Children's Television Act of 1990 is a product of this committee, working with interest groups and the broadcast industry. When it became law, it was heralded as a positive new standard to assist broadcasters in meeting and serving the highest interests of their youngest viewers. Broadcasters have endeavored to provide the programming and other activities that address the educational and informational needs of children, as the law specifies.

Recent publicity on this issue, however, may lead you to another conclusion. A report by one children's advocacy group was released last fall, which was extremely critical of broadcasters.

That report, however, was based only on the record of stations filing for license renewal during the first three months of the new law being in effect. As NAB's written statement points out, this study was premature and failed to address the lack of programming available to broadcasters to meet the new requirements.

The FCC has reported that the overwhelming majority of television stations are in compliance with the commercial time limits of the law. The NAB also reports that the number of entries in its prestigious Service to Children Television Awards competition increased dramatically this year --- a hopeful sign that more and better programming is reaching American young people. We can and should be heartened by these measures.

Between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. each Saturday, WCVB airs four half-hour programs prior to the start of the weekly ABC Saturday morning children's schedule. Three of these programs - "Jabberwocky," "Captain Bob" and "A Likely Story" - were produced by us, and the fourth - "Cappelli and Company," was produced by our Hearst Broadcasting sister station in Pittsburgh, WTAE.

Two of these programs appear on other stations as well. WCVB's "A Likely Story" promotes storytelling and reading through a magic bookmobile and now airs on a total of 80 stations reaching 60% of the children in America. "Cappelli and Company" cleverly uses the medium of song to reach and teach pre-schoolers on not only WTAE and WCVB, but also on the other stations in the Hearst Broadcasting group.

In 1992 alone, WCVB produced three hour-long specials for children and young viewers:

--- "A Kids Guide to Parenting," which we ran twice in prime time on our station and through our national "Family Works!" campaign on 120 stations representing 74% of the country

---"The Incredible Voyage of Bill Pinkney," shown twice on prime time, is the remarkable story and adventure of the first

African-American to sail alone around the world, as an inspiration to black children that they have the same potential for great accomplishment as do all children

--- and "Teen Scene," a town meeting format featuring urban children discussing and examining their deepest challenges and their hopes.

I can look across our city to WHDH-TV and marvel at its station-wide campaign entitled "Imagine That!," which has as its sole mission to interest and excite children about math and science. I can point to WBZ-TV's weekly Saturday noon program - "Rap Around" - where young people again get to express themselves on their own issues of the day.

Looking to the coming months, WCVB and Hearst Broadcasting are developing a national public awareness campaign on competitiveness and preparing our workforce of the future that will include two series for young people - one on science and discovery and the other entitled "High Q," that will be a national high school academic bowl.

Mr. Chairman, Boston is not unique -- it is not an anomaly. WCVB and Hearst Broadcasting did not invent local programming and public service, nor do we have a monopoly on them.

We must also keep in mind that children's programming, regardless of its noble intent -- just like adult prime-time programs -- can and does fail because of the lack of audience or sponsorship support.

As we in free over-the-air television have had to confront, our context...our environment has changed. We have been reduced by an unprecedented national recession. We have been told that perhaps we are a soon-to-be obsolete medium in the face of new programming sources and new delivery systems. In turn, our programming must be ever-more competitive both in terms of audience delivery and in providing some return on its investment.

We in local television are abiding followers of the principle of enlightened self-interest. For the 45-year history of our medium, it has been proven over and over again that those stations that best serve the interests of their community and viewers -- all their viewers from the youngest to their oldest and most loyal -- are the stations that enjoy the highest levels of success.

Creating quality children's programming takes commitment along with the classic ingredients of time and money. Columbia Television's "Beakman's World" and Litton Syndication's "Zoo Life" are two current syndicated examples that meet the standards of the Act. The ABC network over the past two years received well-earned praise for its Peter Jennings' specials with children on the Gulf

War, on racial understanding and tolerance, and most recently with President Clinton.

There needs to be more of these examples of both syndicated and network programs for children, as well as local programs like "Cappelli and Company" and "A Likely Story." Broadcasters need to be given the opportunity to meet the requirements of the Children's Television Act in a reasonable time frame. And if we don't, then we must be prepared to deal with how the FCC views our failings at license renewal time.

We face a new and higher ideal for the children who watch and are served by our stations. And I believe you and your colleagues, who share our interests in the well-being of children, will see a continued improvement in both the quantity and quality of children's television in the months and years ahead.

Thank you.

APPENDIX D

**EXAMPLES OF QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING FROM EXHIBITS
OF STATIONS SEVERELY CRITICIZED BY THE
CENTER FOR MEDIA EDUCATION REPORT**

**KAIT-TV
Jonesboro, AR**

"Kids Like You"

Sundays, effective Sept. 1990

7:00-7:30am, 1/2 hour

Religious in nature, this program teaches children valuable lessons in sharing and being honest.

"A Likely Story"

Sundays, effective Sept. 9, 1991

10:30-11:00am, 1/2 hour

Each 1/2 hour episode is based on story-telling and centers around the adventures of a librarian and her bookmobile and emphasizes the importance of reading. This series is designed for children 4-9 years of age and is part of KAIT-TV's "Great Expectations" project.

In August of 1991, KAIT-TV began a year-long educational project entitled "Great Expectations". This project examines education in various ways. "Great Expectations" reviews education on a national level, but more importantly, focuses on education in the KAIT-TV viewing area.

"Setting Academic Standards"

Monday, Sept. 9, 1991

7:00-8:00pm, 1 hour

This locally produced program examined 1983 Arkansas educational standards, focusing on what had been done to date and what remains to be done.

"The Cheats"

Fridays, December 27, 1991

8:00-9:00pm

This hour-long program centers around four high-school seniors who steal the answers to a final exam and face the consequences of conscience as well as the lost honor of the real world.

KFSM-TV
Fort Smith, AR

Saturday morning programming examples:

"Riders in the Sky"

A mixture of live-action Western characters and puppets. The style of the programs illustrates diverse cultures and positive adult role models. Each episode closes with a message directly aimed at children that includes personal advice and information about growing up and appropriate behavior in life. Another element of this series worth highlighting is the need for children to see the various ethnic groups working together in harmony. For example, there is a group called the "Saddle Pals", composed of an African-American boy, an Asian-American girl, and a White-American boy.

"Where's Waldo"

Based on a very successful series of children's books. Waldo travels to far away places and children learn about them through his travels. It is also an interactive show. Young viewers have the opportunity to problem-solve along with the writers as they try to keep up with the puzzles, clues, riddles, and Waldo.

WDIV-TV
Detroit, MI

"Kidbits"

Saturdays weekly, 6:30-7:00am

Sundays weekly, 5:30-6:00am

This program contains science demonstrations geared toward elementary age children. The experiments are presented in such a manner that children can follow along at home and perform the experiments with ordinary household objects.

"Scratch"

Saturdays weekly, 6:00-6:30am

A magazine-style show for teens ages 12-17. Includes entertainment features and real-life stories that reflect issues facing today's youth, such as AIDS, gang-violence, and teen pregnancy.

WBNA-TV
Louisville, KY

"Widget"

Monday-Friday, 3:00pm

Pro-social and pro-earth. An example of an episode: (W-2: "Gorilla of My Dreams")
Widget learns about the concept of adoption when the cast members' school temporarily "adopts" an endangered species at their local zoo. Endangered species awareness, friendship, and personal involvement in preserving our planet's wonders are all highlighted in this episode. This show has been endorsed by the NEA, National Safe Kids Campaign, and Earth Day International Association. Nominated for the first Annual Environmental Media Association Award.

WXVT-TV
Greenville, MS

"News for Kids"

30-minute segment of new for kids to be pre-recorded by WXVT-TV's news department. Will air Saturday mornings.

"Where's Waldo?"

10:30-11:00am, Saturdays

"Captain Planet"

6:00am, Saturdays

Environmental program using superheroes to defeat abusers of the environment.

WVUE-TV
New Orleans, LA

"Wide World of Kids"

5:30 or 6:00am, 30 minutes

Magazine-style highlighting extraordinary individuals throughout the world.

WGNO-TV
New Orleans, LA

"Earth Journal"

7:30-8:00pm, Sundays

This program teaches adults and children environmental responsibilities.

WHLT-TV
Hattiesburg, MS

"Where's Waldo?"

11:30-Noon, Saturdays

Young viewers' problem-solving skills are promoted as they are encouraged to solve a variety of puzzles, clues, and riddles.